

ACQUISITION AND CONVERSION OR CONSTRUCTION OF
CERTAIN AUXILIARY VESSELS, LANDING CRAFT, AND
DISTRICT CRAFT FOR THE UNITED STATES NAVY

NOVEMBER 29 (legislative day, NOVEMBER 18), 1943.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. WALSH, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, submitted the
following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 1544]

The Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1544) authorizing the acquisition and conversion or construction of certain auxiliary vessels, landing craft, and district craft for the United States Navy, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

The purpose of the bill is to authorize the Secretary of the Navy to acquire and convert, or to undertake the construction of, 2,500,000 tons of auxiliary vessels and 1,000,000 tons of landing craft and district craft. Such craft are to be additional to all auxiliary vessels or craft heretofore authorized. The bill authorizes the appropriation of such sums as may be necessary to effectuate its purposes.

Recent similar authorizations, parts of which remain unassigned, are as follows:

	Tons author- ized	Tons obli- gated or tentatively obligated	Tons balance
Act of June 14, 1940.....	75,000	75,000	None
Act of July 19, 1940.....	100,000	100,000	None
Act of May 24, 1941.....	550,000	549,521	479
Act of December 17, 1941.....	800,000	799,235	765
Amending act of May 24, 1941.....			
Act of July 9, 1942.....	1,200,000	1,198,746	1,254
Act of June 17, 1943.....	1,000,000	921,609	78,391
Act of May 26, 1943.....	1,000,000	996,064	3,936
	4,725,000	4,640,175	84,825

Representatives of the Navy Department appeared before the committee in executive session and stated that the number and types of ships and craft covered by the bill are required in the conduct of the war. The details of some of the requirements were furnished the committee.

The function of auxiliary vessels is primarily to service and maintain the combatant fleet. Most of the additional auxiliary vessels required are for assisting landing craft in amphibious operations. By far the greater portion of the auxiliary tonnage authorized by the bill will be constructed for the Navy by the Maritime Commission. As specified in the act of June 17, 1943, the Navy is required to maintain full control of these ships which are to be manned and operated by the Navy.

The specific plans of operations require that the Navy obligate at once for about 1,800,000 of the 2,500,000 tons of auxiliary vessels authorized by this bill. The Navy estimates that its unforeseen requirements will run about 80,000 tons per month in addition to the foregoing. The bill is designed to give the Navy an operating margin for a reasonable length of time, when they can return to the Naval Affairs Committee to present further developments and requirements.

The act of May 26, 1943 (Public Law 61, 78th Cong.) provided for 1,000,000 tons of landing and district craft. Of this total approximately 996,064 tons have been obligated.

The developments of the war situation indicate that further demands will be made by the operating forces for additional landing and district craft in substantial amounts, and plans have already been laid for increases in the program. These plans must be held in abeyance until further tonnage authorizations are granted. The Navy must obtain authorizations from the Congress to replace losses in landing craft and district craft. It is known that demands will be made for additional landing craft to carry on the war and to replace losses. Authorization for a million tons of landing and district craft is considered necessary to cover these prospective requirements. It may be necessary for the Navy representatives to return to Congress to present additional requirements for landing craft and district craft at a later date. This will necessarily be dictated by the progress of the war.

There are approximately 12 types of landing craft which will require about 800,000 tons of the million included in the bill. Most of those types are familiar to everyone through the press accounts of successful amphibious operations throughout the world. The remaining 200,000 tons will provide small types of vessels such as tugs, oil and gasoline barges, lighters, tenders, and many other different designs to furnish essential services to the operating task forces at advance bases in the various theaters of operations.

Section 2 of the bill authorizes to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of the act. It provides that if money appropriated to the Maritime Commission is used in the construction of these vessels, the Navy shall not reimburse the Commission. This is inserted for the purpose of obviating a double obligation for the same purpose and in no way interferes with the Navy's responsibilities as laid down by the Congress.

A further provision of section 2 of the bill is that vessels acquired by the Navy from the Maritime Commission without reimbursement

shall not be disposed of except by return to the Commission. The decision as to when such vessels shall be returned to the Maritime Commission rests solely with the Navy Department.

The bill was introduced at the request of the Navy Department and has been cleared by the Bureau of the Budget. The cost of the additional tonnage authorized by the bill is estimated at \$5,300,000,000.

The following letter from the Secretary of the Navy, addressed to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, is hereby made a part of this report:

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, November 23, 1943.

HON. SAM RAYBURN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MY DEAR MR. SPEAKER: There is transmitted herewith a draft of a proposed bill authorizing the acquisition and conversion or construction of certain auxiliary vessels, landing craft, and district craft for the United States Navy, and for other purposes.

The purpose of the proposed legislation is to authorize the Secretary of the Navy to acquire and convert or undertake the construction of 2,500,000 tons of auxiliary vessels and 1,000,000 tons of landing craft and district craft additional to those heretofore authorized.

A review of the auxiliary vessel requirements for the Navy which has just been completed indicates that there is urgent need for additional authorization for a total amount of 2,500,000 tons. This amount includes a considerable tonnage of large transports being built by the Maritime Commission that were originally intended to be operated by the War Shipping Administration for the Army. Subsequent to the introduction of the last authorization bill for 1,000,000 tons of auxiliary tonnage (H. R. 1563; Public Law 72, 78th Cong., approved June 17, 1943) it was decided to transfer those ships to the Navy for manning and operation. Revised plans and estimates account for the remainder of the tonnage requested.

The act of May 26, 1943 (Public Law 61, 78th Cong.), provided for 1,000,000 tons of landing and district craft for the Navy. Of this total approximately 955,000 tons had been obligated as of October 15 1943. The developments of the war situation indicate that further demands will be made by the operating forces for additional landing and district craft in substantial amounts, and plans have already been laid for increases in the program for which the small balance of approximately 45,000 tons still remaining from the previous authorization will be altogether inadequate. These plans must be held in abeyance until further tonnage authorization becomes available.

Landing craft and district craft are not replaceable when lost, but must be replaced from additional authorized tonnage. It is known that demands will be made for additional landing craft to carry on the war and to replace losses. Authorization for 1,000,000 tons of landing and district craft is considered necessary to cover these prospective requirements.

The cost of the additional tonnage authorized by the proposed legislation is estimated at \$5,300,000,000.

The Navy Department recommends that the proposed legislation be enacted into law.

The Navy Department has been advised by the Bureau of the Budget that there would be no objection to the submission of the proposed legislation to the Congress.

Sincerely yours,

FRANK KNOX.

